IMPROVING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING BASED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Dr. Navdeep Kaur* & Ms. Monkia Rai**

ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises experiential learning in order to improve the current Indian education pattern and match it more closely with globally accepted educational standards, allowing students to apply their knowledge in real-world circumstances. Under the experiential learning approach there are various experiential learning strategies which can be incorporated in the classroom for effective learning. The main Experiential based instructional strategies such as Good and New, Role Play, Snow Bowling, Gaming, Handout Activity, Prepared sheets, structured Group activities, Project activity, Brainstorming, FishBowl Activity, Open end question, Close end question and Pair Exercises etc. Experiential learning strategies engage students in the development of interpersonal skills in contexts that are personally relevant to them. Experiential learning events that reinforce course content and theory serve to complete students' preparation for their chosen careers. Students learn by doing, discovering, reflecting, and applying in student-centred rather than instructor-centred experiences. By responding to and addressing real-world problems and procedures, students build communication skills and self-confidence, as well as gain and strengthen decision-making skills. So, Experiential based Instructional Strategies plays a very important role for the development of Knowledge, Skills and attitudes of students in an effective way.

Keywords: *Experiential Learning, Instructional Strategies, Teaching and Learning*

Education is a potent tool that may help a person fight and overcome adversity in life. It is a methodical procedure that aids in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, experience, and a positive attitude. It refines, cultures, and civilises one (Parankimalil, 2012). However, the current educational landscape concentrates solely on providing bookish knowledge and rote memorization to kids, which is not the proper technique to give education. A proper education aids in good learning and the holistic development of the student. Learning is defined as a net change in a learner's observable behaviour. Learning and survival are inextricably linked because it allows the learner to adapt to a changing environment based on the need of the hour. Children can learn via experience, producing and doing things, experimenting, and expressing themselves both individually and in groups. They require all of these possibilities in the course of their growth in order to achieve holistic and maximum development. However, it appears that providing experience-based learning is now problematic because the majority of educational systems in underdeveloped and emerging nations continue to employ the traditional lecture mode of teaching, in which the teacher controls the entire classroom activity. This teaching style is essentially a one-way stream from teacher to pupils (Gillies and Khan,

*   Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Guru Nanak Dev. University, Amritsar

**   Research Scholar, Department of Education, Guru Nanak Dev. University, Amritsar

2008). Conventional lectures are less focused on student-teacher interaction. (Saye and Brush, 2006). The necessity of pedagogical changes at all educational levels that would shift away from the prevailing culture of memorization and toward real comprehension and learning how to study was emphasized in a number of policy documents. In order to explore the relationships between various courses, NEP 2020 emphasized that experiential learning will be embraced as the standard methodology for all subjects at all stages. Since experiential learning aims to change students' learning from memorization to doing and self-experience, it has become a crucial component of all new, creative pedagogical approaches. However, many initiatives had been taken by India's state and central governments to incorporate experiential learning in school education to emphasize learning by doing and reflecting on the experiences (CBSE, 2019). There is currently no proof that experiential learning is being implemented effectively, despite numerous attempts by the federal and state governments to guarantee that it is included in school curricula. Furthermore, a broad assessment of the current educational system shows that a number of obstacles prevent the adoption of such creative methods in the classroom.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is not a novel idea. Experiential learning has profound roots. They progress from Aristotle to Buddha, from biological phenomena to veering from the usual course and heading in the proper direction in day-to-day living. The integrated model of learning from experiences is provided by the theories of philosophical pragmatism advanced by John Dewey, social psychology theory by Kurt Lewin, learning during the process of learning

by Carl Rogers, the Montessori method by Maria Montessori, and cognitive theory by Jean Piaget. The idea of experiential learning was initially credited to John Dewey in 1938. According to Dewey, progressive education must include an experiential component in each class. This idea was later developed by Lewin, Piaget, Roger, Montessori, and Kolb. They all felt that rather than only being passive participants, pupils should be actively participating in the class. Real learning also requires actual experiences. Because of this, the student is at the center of experiential learning, and learning the knowledge gained occurs as a result of individual engagement with this teaching strategy.
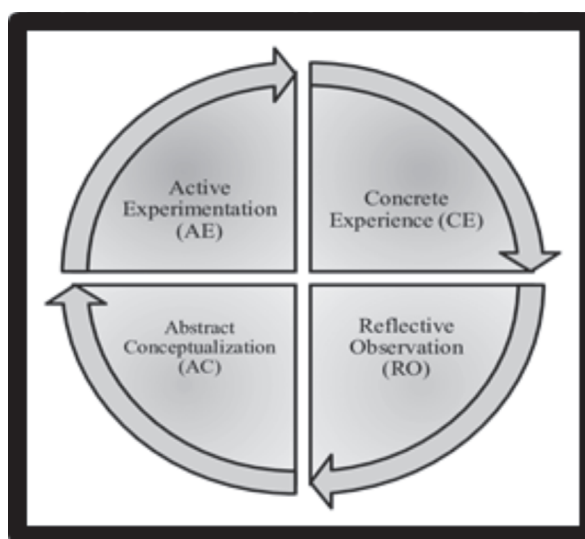
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Instructional Strategies Based on Experiential Learning

Under the experiential learning approach there are various experiential learning strategies which can be incorporated in the classroom for effective learning. Experiential learning strategies means learning strategies that support students in applying their knowledge and

conceptual understanding to real-world problems or situations where the facilitator directs and facilitates learning. The classroom, laboratory or studio can serve as a setting for experiential learning through embedded activities such as Good and New, Role Play, Snow Bowling, Gaming, Handout Activity, Prepared sheets, structured Group activities, Project activity, Brainstorming, FishBowl Activity, Open end question, Close end question and Pair Exercises etc. Experiential learning strategies engage students in the development of interpersonal skills in contexts that are personally relevant to them. Where students are given opportunities to learn in authentic situations on campus or off campus. Following experiential learning strategies were incorporated in the classroom by researchers emphasizing on the inculcation of interpersonal skills.

1) **Good and New Activity:** Under this activity, all students will sit in a circular arrangement as shown in above figure. Then each of them will be asked turn by turn to recall and narrate honestly anything good and new that happened to them in the last week. The student should begin the statement with a self-introduction. Investigators will join in wherever possible. Thus, an atmosphere of free exchange of views and 100% participation on the part of each subject will be ensured.

2) **Role Play:** First step of role play is to set the scene and then role cast. The Facilitator acts as director and assists the actors to fully exploit their roles. The facilitator asks the players to reflect on their performance and their peer members. Feedback is provided through supporting actors, audience and self-appraisal. Afterwards integration of new learning is done by all team members.

3) **Snowballing Activity:** Under this activity

group discussion moves from the smaller groups to the larger groups. First of all, investigators will make the groups/ Pair. Each pair will explore a topic in depth. Each pair of groping will be given five minutes for discussion. After five minutes, one pair will link up with the next nearest pair to form a group of four. This process will continue until the larger group will be formed. During the process the automatic shift in the choice of leaders of various groups will happen. So ultimately the last two big groups leaders will present their final conclusions or points of discussion. At the end the investigator will accept the queries and will ask some questions or invite some questions for the same.

4) **Gaming Activity:** In this activity 15 minutes will be given to three parallel groups which will hold discussion among themselves on three different topics. Each group will be allotted a different topic. Before the discussion, an investigator will briefly introduce the topic by giving an overview of that topic around which students will have to discuss and explore the topic in depth. At the end of discussion, each group leader will present the consensus of the group on the topic following which the investigator will conclude the main points of that topic.

5) **Handouts activity:** Under this activity additional information other than booking knowledge, basically practical knowledge related to real life situations is provided to students.

6) **Prepared sheet activity:** Under this activity four small groups of approximately 10- 15 students will make a group. One group leader will be chosen from the group. In the beginning an investigator will give brief introductions of the topic to make them aware about the current topic. Afterwards,

group leaders of the respective groups will be encouraged to discuss the items of the sheets with their groups. Each member of the groups will be encouraged to participate in the discussion and an investigator will join in wherever possible\required. When all the groups will complete their sheets, the group leader will present their final findings. At last, investigators will conclude by using black board or white board.

7) **Structured Group activities:** In structured group activities group members undertake an experience and after which they discuss their thoughts and feelings about that particular experience. Learning acquired from that is applied in real life situations. While doing tasks like social work in structured group activities paves way for learning interpersonal skills.

8) **Project Activity**: Under this activity, the students will be divided into three or four equal groups. All groups will be required to prepare a project report on the chosen topic and for this they will be given a one day incubation period also. Investigator will provide the students with a list of reference material including books, library documents, newspapers, magazines and internet websites from where they will be able to get good real material on allotted topics. Students will have to work in groups and make one joint project report with the efforts of all the group members. For this they are supposed to choose one group leader also. Investigator will just watch them and assist them wherever required.

9) **Brainstorming Activity:** In this activity, an investigator will first give a brief introduction of the topic. Then she will start her brainstorming activity. She will raise as many questions as she can from the given

list of questions prepared beforehand. The whole class will be treated as one group and all the students will be encouraged to participate by giving small gifts as a means of motivational efforts. Investigator will give situational based questions related to the topic in order to clear the concept in detail and to create interest also. She will write the main conclusions or points on the board simultaneously. For this she will use various pictures in the form of flash cards to create interest. At last, the final summary of the topic will be narrated by the investigator.

10) **Fishbowl**: Under this activity, two circles of chairs will be set, one smaller within another larger circle (As shown in the seating plan of this activity). Initially five people will sit in the inner circle and the rest will sit in the outer. The trainer will also sit in the inner circle. A discussion on the topic concept and sources of human capital formation will be carried on among the people sitting in the inner circle. Three rules must apply to the conduct of the discussion. 1) at all times, there must be one empty chair in the inner circle. 2) In order to speak, a person must be sitting in the inner circle. A person in the inner circle may leave it to sit in the outer circle at any time during the discussion. In this way, there is a fairly frequent coming and going between the two circles. Participants have to exercise judgment about when to leave and join the discussion. They can also switch between being active participants and observers. After the activity is over, the investigator will conclude the topic and jotted down some important points of discussion on the board.

Through experiential learning strategies students learning become more effective both in

instructional effects as well as nurturant effects.

- The knowledge of students gets deeper due to repeated experience followed by immediate reflection
- Focused on development of interpersonal skills through group discussion, practice and reflection,
- Assist in the formation of new understandings when confronted with an unfamiliar circumstance.
- Encourage students to get to be familiar with each other and to promote a positive atmosphere at the start of a group,
- Develop mutual understanding
- Provide experience for a highly structured form of group discussion,
- Develop leadership qualities,
- Develop co-operation and mutual concern among individuals.

According to Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett and Norman (2010), in experiential learning methodologies, students engage in learning experiences. Opportunities for practice and feedback boost the relevance of learning for them, resulting in increased motivation to learn both knowledge and skills. Students are exposed to novel events and tasks in a real-world setting through experiential learning. Students must determine what they know, what they do not know, and how to learn it in order to perform these tasks. Students use experiential learning tactics to reflect on and reinforce their existing knowledge; transfer previous learning to new situations; frame generalisations; and master new concepts, principles, and skills. Linn, Howard and Miller (2004). Finally, these abilities produce students who are lifelong learners.

Role of Instructor in Experiential Learning

Where pupils are naturally interested in learning, the instructor facilitates rather than controls the learning process in experiential learning. The instructor takes on the role of facilitator and is guided by a series of critical steps in experiential learning. (Wurdinger and Carlson, 2010).

- Be open to taking on a less teacher-centric role in the classroom.
- Approach the learning experience in a non-dominant, positive manner.
- Choose an experience in which students will be interested and genuinely invested.
- Explain to the pupils the purpose of the experiential learning environment.
- Share your feelings and opinions with your pupils, and let them know you're learning as well.
- Connect course learning objectives to course activities and direct experiences so students know what to do.
- Provide students with relevant and meaningful resources to help them achieve.
- Allow pupils to experiment and come up with their own answers.
- Strike a balance between academic and nurturing components of teaching.
- Define the roles of students and instructors.

Role of Student in Experiential Learning

Experiential learning characteristics are those in which students choose to be personally involved in the learning experience (students actively participate in their own learning and play a personal role in the direction of learning). Students are not entirely left to teach themselves; instead, the teacher serves as a guide and aids in the learning process. The list of student responsibilities below was adapted from (Wurdinger and Carlson, 2010).

- Students will be immersed in practical, social, and personal challenges.
- Students will be given freedom in the

classroom as long as they make progress in their studies.

- While learning, students will frequently encounter difficult and hard situations.
- Students will self-assess their own progress or success in the learning process, which will serve as the primary mode of assessment.
- Students will learn from the learning process and become receptive to change. This shift includes relying less on the instructor and more on peers, developing skills to study (research) and learn from actual experiences, and being able to objectively self-evaluate one's performance.

Conclusion

So, we can say that, Experiential learning strategies engage students in the development of interpersonal skills in contexts that are personally relevant to them. Experiential learning events that reinforce course content and theory serve to complete students' preparation for their chosen careers. Students learn by doing, discovering, reflecting, and applying in student-centred rather than instructor-centred experiences. By responding to and addressing real-world problems and procedures, students build communication skills and self-confidence, as well as gain and strengthen decision-making skills. So, Experiential based Instructional Strategies plays a very important role for the development of Knowledge, Skills and attitudes of students in an effective way.

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